



## CHAPTER VI.

### On a New Scent.

Stepping from the blackness of the cavern into the light of the fire and the lamp, Barrington was for a moment blind. As soon as he could see plainly he held out his hand to Nolan who grasped it with a vigor that made the consul wince. Turning to the Frenchman John smiled his appreciation of the manner in which he had been taken care of, and his eyes then strayed to the kitchen to embrace in his gratitude the graceful and fearless girl who had so well served him. She saw the look and the blush it brought to her face was very becoming. Nolan also saw it and his eyes grew gloomy, but there was no hate in them.

"With your permission," remarked Barrington, "I will see what my sister has to say." He broke the seal as he spoke. As he read the letter his face flushed with anger. Belle told him how she had carried out his instructions and instead of retiring had sat at the head of the stairs with a revolver in her hand intending to defend the house in case of any attempt to enter it. She then described how, as she was sitting there, she was approached from behind, and her arms safely pinioned; how she was lifted bodily in the arms of a large strong man wearing a mask and seated upon a chair.

"While he was binding me to it with a rope," wrote the girl, "I snatched at his mask and tore it from his face. It was an evil countenance heavily bearded. The color of the hair was brown, and the beard almost red. The eyes of the man were small and a very light blue. His neck was unusually thick and long, and when angry, as he was then the veins stood out upon it like whip cords. His teeth, which he showed in a sort of a snarl, were yellow and irregular, the front ones particularly prominent. His right thumb was done up in a rag, and the left shoulder seemed lower than the other. His arms were unusually long and muscular. He stooped slightly, but even at that, was a tall man. I describe him minutely so that you may be able to recognize him. The picture will never fade from my mind."

"When I was tied," continued the letter, "he turned with an oath and called out: 'All right, Pug,' and then went down stairs. I could hear some one scramble down the Wisteria vine and later came in at the front door which was opened by my captor. I heard a dull grinding noise for a few moments and then a muffled explosion. A thin, light smoke came trailing up the stairs, which spread as it came and almost suffocated me. After a few minutes silence I heard angry voices, an imprecation, and the front door closed. How long I sat, I do not know. When the milkman came I screamed and he, trying the front door and finding it open, came up stairs directed by the sound of my voice, and released me.

"Going down stairs I found the safe had been blown open and its contents ransacked. The milkman hurried to town and said he would notify the police, but they have not been here yet. No one dreamed I had the report, and I was not molested further.

"Do be careful, John. I send you the report as requested by that brave girl, Miss Langlois, and will, as you suggest, make for Washington at once. I know the report by heart."

"I suppose the report has been turned over," remarked Barrington as he folded his sister's letter and threw it in the fire.

"Yep, Yami has it," replied Nolan. He could not prevent a note of sharpness creeping into his tone. Jeanette's evident admiration for the young consul irritated him. Barrington looked odd with his closely cropped hair and smooth, stained face. The firm chin and determined mouth were brought out plainly, making the face more strong than handsome—excepting when he smiled.

Nolan sighed as he looked at Barrington. He realized the man who proved his friend might prove his rival. Then with a heroism of which men are sometimes capable, he accepted what he believed to be the inevitable, and with self condemnation and bitterness placed his past as a barrier between him and any thoughts of domestic happiness. Notwithstanding this, he could not help the heart ache that possessed him. It was a sad, subdued, but regenerated Nolan that took his seat with the others at

the table to do justice to the plain supper Jeanette had prepared.

Pierre not trusting to the apparent satisfaction of Yami and Quigley, went out into the night, and in the bitter cold placed himself in the shadow of the cabin to guard against a surprise.

After thanking Jeanette for the service she had rendered him, John fell to and ate heartily. Nolan's discovery of his feelings toward Jeanette did not seem to impair his appetite, sharpened by a long time between meals and the walk through the storm.

All cracks and crannies were closed against prying eyes, and Barrington felt decidedly comfortable as he lit his pipe. It was not to endure long however. Pierre stuck his head in the door and ordered the Consul to the cavern—quick. Jeanette swung the cupboard and again Barrington entered the blackness, but this time with a candle in his hand.

He found himself in a chamber about the size of the cabin. It had evidently been hewn out of the rock. A closer inspection of the side wall showed him why, as toward the ceiling he could plainly trace the calcite formation and a vein plainly bearing silver values. Cobalt stain was plentiful, and some native silver was to be seen. At the rear of the chamber was a passage sufficiently wide to admit of one man walking through it, and high enough for him to do so by stooping. The flame of the candle inclined gently toward this passage and the air was clear, showing there was an entrance from the other end.



When the door had closed upon the retreating form of the desperado the cupboard again swung outward, and Barrington was once more brought into the light shed by the kitchen lamp.

Hearing voices he put out his light, stuck the candle in his vest pocket and cautiously approaching the cupboard placed his ear to a crack between the boards. The outer door of the cupboard was closed and he could distinguish no words. Whether it was by accident or design, he was unable to determine, but someone opened the cupboard door. It was Jeanette who was putting away the dishes. As the door opened he could hear her brother say: "Please leave us for a few minutes, Jeanette." She did so, but left the cupboard door open, and Barrington could not help but believe she did it for his benefit. No one attempted to close it. Through the crack he could see the feet and legs of the intruder whose right hand, resting upon his knee was done up in a rag. Try as he would Barrington could catch no glimpse of the face.

"Yes," he heard the stranger say, "on the north shore of Superior the cases will be unloaded with a cargo of coal Quigley has bought for th' mine and will be distributed through th' Northwest as mining and milling machinery. Th' same steamer will make several trips coal laden. Th' guns will be landed under the cover of night and stowed away in a blind cross cut in th' mine opened up for that purpose."

"Where do they come from?" asked Pierre, lazily.

"I dunno, nor care. I'm after the long green and there is plenty of it.

An' then I can get back to th' smell of salt water again. It'll be a matter of a year or more before things are ready, an' then this end of it will be more to bother th' United States than with any idea of a real invasion, sort o' make em split their forces while th' Japs dig in on th' Pacific. That's where th' fun will be, an' that's where you'll find me when it begins, but in th' meantime, I'm turning an honest penny by helpin' Quigley an' th' bunch kind o' round up things. We're goin' t' light out f' th' Lake Superior region, now th' consul is taken care of. Your part of th' job at present is t' keep your eyes peeled an' tip off th' moves of th' opposition if there is any row kicked up regardin' th' consul. I calculate Calton will help t' throw em' off th' track. Like me he don't care a durn f' the mix up, but he's out f' the coin an' t' help men that'll help him later."

"I understand, Jim," he added turning to Nolan, "that you have kicked over th' traces an' thrown up th' hull scheme. Don't think you're wise, Yami ain't a man t' be crossed. Taint none of my business, but ten chances t' one, some o' your friends will find you with a knife left between your ribs. If you are determined to drop out of it, take my advice an' steer clear o' th' gang. It won't be healthy to do different."

The repeated clink of glasses told Barrington that Pierre was plying the liberal host to good effect. The man must have had something to drink before he arrived because his tongue became looser.

"Quigley's game has been a queer one, even before he picked up with Yami. Th' mine is a regular store house, and more opium, whiskey, and English cutlery has found its way into th' United States than has been dreamed of. Then his is a ready market for all th' stolen silver nuggets that comes his way. He has regular buyers at Cobalt."

As he rose unsteadily to his feet to take his leave, his face came within the vision of the consul who saw the reddish beard described by his sister, noted the right thumb done up in a rag and the lower left shoulder. He also recognized him as the man who

the trick. It means quick, sharp work."

The consul had taken command and was thinking deeply. "This revelation alters my plans. Let me see," he consulted his watch. "It now lacks five minutes of midnight. Jim will you come with me?"

Nolan nodded and Pierre threw off all appearances of lethargy.

"Following the ravine from below the cave, Pierre, how far is it to the river, and what kind of cover can a man keep under?"

"Five miles," replied Langlois, "all in the creek and in the shadow of the banks and bushes. You will have four water gates to climb, and you will leave a plain trail in the snow."

"I cannot help that," retorted Barrington tossing his head as he always did when excited and opposed. "I will walk first and Jim can follow in my footsteps making the trail as of but one man. The only danger would be of ambush, did any one suspect the trip. Out on the lake we can fight as well as in any other place in the open—if necessary."

"What do you propose to do?" asked Langlois.

"Make the Michigan side, get in touch with Washington, go north in the state, cross the straits and again strike Canadian territory at the Canadian Soo."

"And then?"

"Meet you at Sudbury on the Canadian Pacific."

"When?"

"Let me see, this is Tuesday—say on Saturday. If I am not there wait."

"Jim," he exclaimed, "on the whole I think you had better follow your original intention, go to Montreal, cash your check and buy your ticket to WINNEPEG. You can then drop off at Sudbury, or better yet, go on to Port Arthur—No, that is too close to future operations. You would be suspected. Make it Sudbury. Inquire for John Hardinge."

Without comment Pierre got up, found Barrington's sealskin cap, dusting it off and handing it to the owner he ascended the ladder to the attic above where the sleeping accommodations were located, and returned with the consul's overcoat and gloves as well as a box of center fire 38 calibre cartridges.

"This is only a makeshift nook," explained Pierre with a smile as Barrington prepared to depart. "We do not live here regularly, and my sister is seldom here. She spends most of her time at Montreal with an uncle, and at Port Arthur with a sister now a widow."

"I think I can understand," ventured Barrington nodding significantly toward the cavern. Pierre started.

"Yes," replied Langlois is a low voice. "It is not known that such formation exists in this end of the country, and until I have corraled more property, I am keeping it quiet. Midnight work has taken many thousands of dollars from that chamber, and the proceeds have gone into property surrounding it, the deeds to which go on record as soon as Quigley leaves for the west."

"I will keep your confidence," Barrington assured him, "and now may I bid farewell to you sister?"

"Certainly," answered Pierre opening the kitchen door. He was about to call her when Barrington stopped him. She was seated in a chair, her head resting upon its back fast asleep. Two stray locks of glossy brown had escaped from their fastenings and trailed over her shoulder. The flush of perfect health adorned her cheeks and her dark long, lashes lay upon them.

"Don't disturb her," whispered Barrington as he stepped back into the main room. As he did so he caught sight of the face of Nolan. Upon it was an expression of tenderness as the man looked upon the sleeping girl, and from his eyes there came passionate, hungry love. As the soldier turned, his eyes were moist. He had unconsciously told Barrington still another story.

Swinging the cupboard to behind them, Pierre stepped forward and piloted the others through the narrow, dark passage until the night wind fanned their cheeks and the dim light reflected from the snow, showed a round opening ahead. Arriving at the mouth, Pierre set the lantern behind a rock so its rays would not be seen from without, and unfastening a coil of rope, threw the weighted end far out.

"It's a hundred feet," he explained. "You had better take one turn around your leg, let the rope come up along your back under your shoulder, and you will find it will not hurt you to descend."

(To be continued.)

## NOTHING DOING.

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